



DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE AND REQUEST FOR COMMENTS ON SCOPE OF EIS

Snohomish County 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update: Environmental Impact Statement

Description of Proposal

Snohomish County is updating its Comprehensive Plan consistent with the Growth Management Act (GMA; RCW 36.70A). Pursuant to the GMA, Snohomish County is required to complete an update of the Comprehensive Plan by June 2015. Snohomish County's Comprehensive Plan consists of the General Policy Plan (GPP), Future Land Use Map, Transportation Element, Capital Facilities Plan, and Park and Recreation Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan is designed to help the County meet its long term vision for land use and growth management in unincorporated areas outside of cities and towns. The County's plan allocates population and employment growth with a majority of growth occurring in Urban Growth Areas (UGAs), reduces sprawl in rural areas and maintains rural character, conserves agricultural, forest and mineral lands of long-term commercial significance, and protects open space, cultural, and scenic resources. The County's Comprehensive Plan is required to be consistent with the Countywide Planning Policies developed by Snohomish County Tomorrow (SCT) and with regional plans such as the Puget Sound Regional Council's (PSRC's) VISION 2040 which contains multi-county planning policies in accordance with GMA.

The present Snohomish County Comprehensive Plan applies through the year 2025. The County is studying growth to a new 20-year horizon – 2035. All preliminary alternatives study the State Office of Financial Management's Medium Forecast resulting in 238,281 new persons between 2011-2035, as well as new jobs – however the distribution of the growth would differ. Three land use and growth alternatives are currently under consideration that bookend a range of growth patterns:

Alternative 1, Vision 2040 County Council Initial Growth Targets: This alternative represents a commitment to VISION 2040's Regional Growth Strategy, and would allocate much lower growth in the unincorporated urban growth areas (UGAs) and rural/resource areas, and direct this growth instead into the cities. No Future Land Use Map amendments would be made. Limited policy amendments would be made such as to the safety factor policy in Countywide Planning Policies and Transfer of Development Rights Population reserve in the General Policy Plan. About 92% of new population growth would go into the UGAs and about 8% in the rural areas. Within the UGA, about one-quarter of the growth would go to the unincorporated UGA and three quarters to cities. Most of the UGA growth would go to Large cities and the Metropolitan city of Everett.

Alternative 2, Snohomish County Tomorrow Recommended Growth Targets, No Action Alternative: This alternative includes the initial population growth targets recommended by SCT and assumes no changes to the land uses as currently shown on the County's Future Land Use Map. It is expected that there will be no policy changes necessary to implement this alternative. Therefore, this alternative meets the requirements as a county "no action" alternative under SEPA. About 90% of new growth would be located in the UGA and 10% in the rural area. Within the UGA, about one-third of the growth would be in the unincorporated UGA and about two-thirds in cities. The growth in the cities would be distributed primarily to Large cities, with the Metropolitan City of Everett at a moderate share compared to Alternative 1.

Alternative 3, Snohomish County Tomorrow Recommended Growth Targets with Infill and Docket Proposals: This alternative includes the initial population growth targets recommended by SCT. It also considers some land use and regulatory changes to gain a modest increase in unincorporated development capacity predominantly in the Southwest UGA. This alternative also includes proposed Docket Amendment Requests that would amend land use classifications and in some cases UGA boundaries, such as those that increase boundaries in some locations and reduce them elsewhere. Growth shares are the same as in Alternative 2.

Transportation Element: The Transportation Element includes level-of-service standards for county arterials and transit routes. The EIS scope may include potential revisions to level-of-service and concurrency standards.

General Policy Plan: The GPP provides overall policy direction for all of the various components of the GMA Comprehensive Plan, and includes goals and policies for all of the plan elements, the future land use map and other supporting maps. The EIS scope may include potential revisions to the GPP to implement any of the three land use alternatives.

Proponent

Snohomish County

Location of Proposal

The proposal encompasses all of unincorporated Snohomish County. Snohomish County is located on Puget Sound, between Skagit County to the north and King County to the south. It contains approximately 2,090 square miles.

Lead Agency

Snohomish County Planning and Development Services

EIS Required

The lead agency has determined this proposal is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment. An environmental impact statement (EIS) is required under RCW 43.21C.030 (2)(c) and will be prepared. A scoping document indicating likely environmental impacts can be reviewed at our offices and at the project website: <http://2015update-snoco.org/>.

The lead agency has identified the following areas for discussion in the EIS: Soil/Erosion, Air Quality/Climate, Water Resources, Plants/Wetlands/Wildlife/Threatened & Endangered Species, Land and Shoreline Use, Plans and Policies, Population, Housing, Employment Cultural Resources, Transportation Police, Fire, Emergency Medical Services, Parks, Schools, Water Systems, Sanitary Sewer Systems, Drainage Systems, Telecommunications, and Solid Waste.

Scoping

Agencies, affected tribes, and members of the public are invited to comment on the scope of the EIS. You may comment on alternatives, mitigation measures, probable significant adverse impacts, and licenses or other approvals that may be required. The method and deadline for giving us your comments is:

Comment period: September 24 – October 22, 2013. Submit comments no later than **5:00 pm October 22, 2013**. Send written comments to:


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A **scoping public meeting** is scheduled for: **October 8, 2013 6:00-8:00 pm, NW Stream Center, McCollum Park, 600-128th Street SE, Everett**. At this meeting you can ask questions, learn more about the 2015 Comprehensive Plan Update and Alternatives, the EIS process, and submit written comments.

Responsible official

Clay White, Director
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Signature: 

Date 9/20/13